



The Corridor

VISITOR GUIDE

Road Accessible Public Lands between Anchorage and Fairbanks



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Sharing Alaska's Natural and Cultural Heritage

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Welcome to Alaska Public Lands Information

Centers. *The Corridor* is your guide for travel between Alaska's two largest cities, Anchorage and Fairbanks. These cities boast of vastly differing characteristics: Anchorage is the busy commercial hub of Alaska industry and travel while Fairbanks embraces its heritage as a historic gold rush city; Anchorage is a coastal city on Cook Inlet and Fairbanks is in the heart of the Interior.

As you travel this 358-mile-long corridor, you will experience some of the most breathtaking scenery in the United States. The highway provides access to many of the 325 million acres of public land in Alaska, including Denali state and national parks as well as views of Mount McKinley, North America's highest peak.

The Alaska Public Lands Information Centers located in Anchorage and Fairbanks are but two of the four centers authorized by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980. Additional information centers are located in Ketchikan and Tok. These centers help to inform, educate and assist travelers in planning their Alaska experience. You can even reach us before you arrive by visiting us on the web at www.nps.gov/aplic.

Clay Alderson
Superintendent

CREDITS

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Produced and Designed by



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Alaska Public Lands Information Centers

The Alaska Public Lands Information Centers are gateways to the parks, forests and refuges of Alaska. They were established as part of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 to provide residents and visitors access to information and education about their public lands.

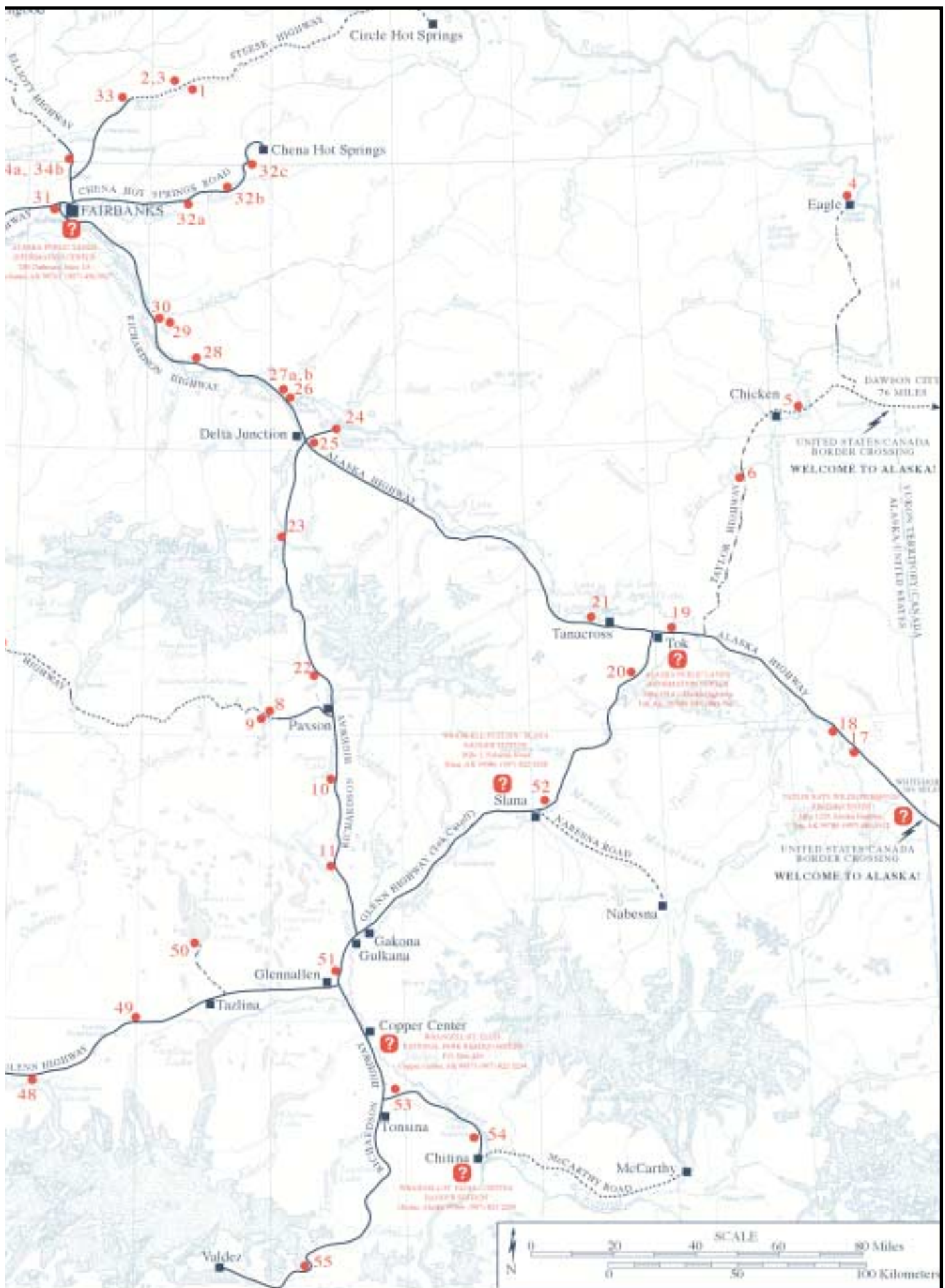
Public land in Alaska accounts for over 235 state and federal units, encompassing 80% of the state. These areas include 16 national parks, 16 national wildlife refuges, 133 state parks and recreation areas, the nation's two largest national forests, and numerous other conservation units. National parks in Alaska comprise over half of the acreage in the entire national park system. Topping that figure, 88% of all national wildlife refuge acreage is found in Alaska. Alaska's state parks total three million acres, making it the largest state system in the nation.

The enormous amount of public land in Alaska provides for an exponential number of recreational and educational opportunities. The Alaska Public Lands Information Centers provide visitors with information at each of four strategic locations throughout the state. The National Park Service manages the facilities in Anchorage and Fairbanks to serve air travelers and Alaska's largest urban communities. The State of Alaska directs the Center in Tok, entry point for travelers along the Alaska-Canada Highway. The Southeast Discovery Center in Ketchikan, a major port for ferry and cruise ships, is operated by the U.S. Forest Service. Based on their location, each center by necessity has a regional expertise, but all the centers help residents and visitors enjoy Alaska.



		MAX STAY # OF UNITS	WATER	TOILETS	FISHING	BOAT RAMP	CAMPING	PAWS	SHOOTING
U.S. BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (807) 271-6344									
1. Cripple Creek	10	18	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
2. Mt. Windie	10	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3. Eagle	10	19	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
4. Eagle	10	16	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
5. Walker Fork	10	20	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
6. West Fork	10	28	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
7. Steamboat	14	21	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
8. Eagle Lake	14	27	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
9. Delta Reservoir	11	8	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
10. Pyramid Lake	14	20	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
11. Steamboat Creek	14	41	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
12. Rocky Lake	14	15	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
13. Morrow Creek	14	27	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
14. Gifford Lake	14	20	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
U.S. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (807) 683-3294 1-800-625-7377									
15. a. Riley Creek	149	100	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
b. Stearns Reservoir	14	90	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
c. Storage Reservoir	149	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
d. Storage Reservoir	14	3	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
e. Stearns Reservoir	149	7	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
f. Stearns Reservoir	149	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
g. Upper Creek	14	7	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
h. Stearns Lake	14	28	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE (807) 884-6312									
17. Deadwater Lake	14	15	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
18. Lakeview	14	8	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
ALASKA STATE DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION (807) 268-0400									
19. Tok River	15	43	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
20. Eagle Trail	15	45	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
21. Moose Lake	15	15	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
22. Fishing Lake	15	15	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
23. Deadwater Creek	15	12	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
24. Chertanok	15	16	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
25. Tok	15	24	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
26. Big Lake	15	25	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
27. Quartz Lake SRA									
a. Quartz Lake	15	90	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
b. Lost Lake	15	12	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
28. Birch Lake	15	10	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
29. Steadfast Lake	15	81	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
30. Jackson River	15	6	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
31. Chena River SRA	8	61	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
32. Chena River SRA									
a. Reservoir	15	37	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
b. Two Fork	15	24	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
c. Red River	15	9	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
33. U. Chena River SRA	15	35	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
34. L. Chena River SRA									
a. Reservoir	15	25	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
b. Chena River	15	15	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
35. Denali NP									
a. L. Treadwell	15	20	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
b. Treadwell	15	20	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
c. Denali Reservoir	15	20	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
36. Willow Creek SRA									
a. Willow Creek	8	140	Y						





Alaska Public Lands Information Center—Anchorage

Directions

Located in the historic Federal Building on Fourth Avenue and F Street in downtown Anchorage, this interagency center offers a variety of year-round programs and services to residents and visitors alike.



Summer Activities

During the summer, visitors seek trip planning information and a chance to view the free movies and exhibits. The center offers an overview of Alaska's natural and cultural heritage, providing visitors with a preview of things to come in their adventures in

Alaska. Daily programs at 2 p.m. feature live animals from the Bird Treatment and Learning Center and the Alaska Zoo. Authors, photographers and scientists also share their knowledge and experience through readings, demonstrations and illustrated programs. Daily walking tours at 11 a.m. highlight the historical, cultural and natural resources of the state.

Winter Activities

During the winter, the center shifts focus and the primary visitors are students from the surrounding community. Each school year National Park Service rangers provide students with educational experiences about the importance of parks and public lands in Alaska. The staff facilitates scavenger hunts, puppet shows, films, special events and live animal programs.

Visitor Center

The Alaska Public Lands Information Center in Anchorage is open 7 days a week from Memorial Day to Labor Day, and Monday through Friday during the winter. Visitors can purchase park entrance and day-use passes, as well as books and maps from the Alaska Natural History Association bookstore.

For More Information

Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center
605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 105
Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone: 907-271-2737
Fax: 907-271-2744
www.nps.gov/aplic



Chugach State Park—Eagle River

Directions

Take the Eagle River Loop Road exit off the Glenn Highway, 13-15 miles north of Anchorage. Travel 12 miles east on Eagle River Road to the nature center.

History

The Eagle River Valley was carved into the landscape by receding glaciers. A 26-mile segment of the Historic Iditarod Trail runs from the town of Girdwood, up and over Crow Pass, to the Eagle River Nature Center. In the early 1900s, before the Alaska Railroad or Seward Highway was constructed, miners and prospectors followed this route as they headed north in search of gold.

Activities

Summer visitors to the Eagle River area enjoy hiking, whitewater rafting and kayaking, fishing for Dolly Varden and King Salmon, wildlife viewing, photography and berry picking. A variety of hiking trails start from the Nature Center, including the Iditarod and Crow Pass trails. Winter activities include cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, dog sledding, skijoring, ice climbing, winter photography and "sky watching." Long hours of darkness during the winter months create the perfect backdrop for bright constellations and northern lights.

Camping

Eagle River Campground, open May through September, is located one mile south of town on Eagle River Loop Road at mile 12 of the Glenn Highway. This facility offers 57 campsites, picnic tables, fire pits, water, flush toilets and a RV dump station. An overflow camping area provides 10 additional sites. Camping fees are \$15 per night, with a four-night limit. Eagle River Nature Center rents one cabin and two yurts, both accessible by foot, year-round.

Visitor Center

There is a \$5 parking fee at Eagle River Nature Center. The Center offers a gift shop, limited outdoor gear rental, interpretive displays, programs and visitor information.

For More Information

Eagle River Nature Center
32750 Eagle River Road
Eagle River, AK 99577
Phone: 907-694-2108
Fax: 907-694-2119
www.ernc.org



Eklutna Lake

Directions

Take the Eklutna Lake exit at mile 26 on the Glenn Highway, and follow park signs ten miles to Eklutna Lake.

History

The Eklutna Glacier carved this valley as it retreated, leaving horizontal scarring on rock formations as evidence of its passage. Glacial and freshwater streams flowing into the valley created this seven-mile-long lake, an excellent place to fish, canoe, kayak, windsurf and sail. Eklutna Lake feeds a power plant and provides drinking water for the Anchorage area.

Activities

Summer visitors enjoy hiking, biking, horseback riding, climbing, picnicking, fishing and boating. ATVs share trails Sunday through Wednesday in the summer. Winter activities include cross-country skiing, dog mushing and snowmachining. The weather can change rapidly in this valley, bringing sudden high winds, especially in the afternoon. Watch the weather closely and always wear a personal flotation device when on the water.

Camping

Eklutna Lake Campground has 50 campsites, water, toilets, picnic tables and fire pits. An overflow camping area has 15 sites. Camping fees are posted, and camping is allowed for 15 consecutive nights. The Eklutna Lake or Yuditnu Cabin, 3 miles from the trailhead, is available year-round. Call 907-269-8400 for reservations.

There are two remote campgrounds along the Lakeside Trail: Eklutna Alex Campground at mile 8.8, and Kanchee at mile 11. These can be reached by foot, bicycle, horseback or snowmachine. There are toilets, a picnic table and fire ring at each site. There is no fee for staying in these campgrounds.

Facilities

Interpretive displays, a telescope for viewing wildlife and a concessionsaire are located near the trailhead parking area. There is a picnic shelter for group activities in the day-use area. A large group picnic and camping area may be reserved and are handicapped accessible.

For More Information

Chugach State Park Headquarters
HC59, Box 8999
Indian, AK 99540
907-345-5014
www.alaskastateparks.org



Palmer Area

Palmer, 42 miles from Anchorage on the Palmer-Wasilla Highway is a must-stop. Palmer is centrally located for a wide variety of activities at Hatcher's Pass, Independence Mine and Summit Lake Recreational Area to the north; Kepler-Bradley State Recreation Area and the Palmer Hayflats State Game Sanctuary to the south; Finger Lake State Recreation Site to the west; and the town of Sutton to the east.

For More Information

Mat-Su Convention and Visitors Bureau
HC01, Box 6166 J21
Palmer AK 99645
Phone: 907-746-5000
Fax: 907-746-2688
www.alaskavisit.com

Independence Mine State Historical Park

Directions

Just past Palmer, turn left off the Glenn Highway onto Hatcher Pass Road and head 17 miles to Independence Mine State Historical Park. Check road conditions between September 15 and May 30. The use of snowmachines and off-road vehicles is prohibited in the park but allowed in surrounding areas.



History

Before gold-seekers began their stampede into Nome, Fairbanks or the Yukon, gold was discovered in the Susitna and Matanuska river basins where hard rock (lode) gold was found scattered in quartz veins throughout the granite in the Talkeetna Mountains. In 1906, Robert Lee Hatcher discovered and staked the first lode gold claim in the Willow Creek Valley.

Lode mining was expensive because it required elaborate tunnels and heavy equipment, so companies merged to pool resources and reduce expenses. The claims at Independence Mine covered more than 1,350 acres and included 27 structures. In its peak year, 1941, the Alaska Pacific Consolidated Mining Company employed 204 men, blasted nearly a dozen miles of tunnels, and produced 34,416 ounces of gold worth \$17,208,000 today.

In 1974, Independence Mine was entered into the National Register of Historic Places, and in 1981 it became a state park.

Visitor Center

The visitor center is open during the summer from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. Guided tours depart at 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. daily on weekdays. On weekends and holidays an additional tour is offered at 4:30 p.m. There is a day-use parking fee and a separate tour fee. The visitor center is closed during the winter.

Activities

Hiking, mountain biking and year-round trails await visitors to Independence Mine and the Hatcher Pass area. Winter activities include skiing, snowboarding, snowmachining and backcountry hiking. Backcountry travelers should be self-reliant and equipped in avalanche rescue. Two nearby lodges provide year-round accommodations.

For More Information

Independence Mine State Historical Park
Visitor Center
907-745-2827

Please Help Protect Our Parks

Artifacts should be left for others to enjoy. It is against state law to remove or disturb them.



Nancy Lake State Recreation Area

Directions

Turn west onto Nancy Lake Parkway at mile 67.3 of the Parks Highway. From there, the road travels 6.5 miles southwest to South Rolly Lake Campground. In winter, the parkway is not plowed beyond the winter trailhead at mile 2.2. The community of Willow lies two miles north of the Parks Highway junction, and has a full range of services for the traveler.

History

When the ice retreated from this area some 9,000 years ago, it left a rolling landscape of elongated glacial deposits, called drumlins, dotted with hundreds of lakes and ponds. State archaeologists believe that people lived in the region soon after the glaciers receded. It is believed that Tanaina Indians and Pacific Eskimos occupied the area. Two prehistoric village sites have been identified just outside the recreation area. The nearby towns of Wasilla, Houston and Willow grew as homesteaders settled on land opened up by rail access.

Activities

Nancy Lake State Recreation Area is one of the few flat, lake-studded landscapes in Alaska preserved for recreation purposes. The clear waters are ringed with unspoiled forests and provide tranquil settings for canoeing and fishing. The area features a well-developed canoe trail system, but off-trail hiking is limited by heavy underbrush and wet terrain. In winter, the rolling topography is ideal for cross-country skiing, dog mushing and snowmachining.

There are two maintained campgrounds with road access, water and toilets. South Rolly at the end of the parkway has 98 sites and Nancy Lake State Recreation Site, reached from mile 66.5 of the Parks Highway, has over 30 sites.

Public Use Cabins

There are several rustic cabins available for rent on a nightly basis. Cabins are located on Red Shirt, Lynx, Nancy, James and Bald lakes. The cabins are equipped with wooden bunks, wood-burning stoves, an outhouse and an outdoor fire ring. Occupants need to bring all personal items, including drinking water and firewood. Only wood that is down and dead may be gathered. Use of the cabins is by reservation only. Campfires are permitted only in the developed fireplaces provided.

For More Information

Nancy Lake Ranger Station
Mile 1.3 Nancy Lake Parkway
P.O. Box 10
Willow, AK 99688
Phone: 907-495-6273
Fax: 907-495-6671



Big Lake Area

The largest lake in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley is popular for boating, waterskiing, fishing and camping. Big Lake North and South offer campsites, picnic areas, boat launches and water-based recreation. There are numerous private campgrounds as well as private homes in the area.

Willow Area—An Angler's Paradise

Directions

Willow is located 70 miles north of Anchorage and 289 miles south of Fairbanks on the Parks Highway. The area encompasses lands north of Nancy Lake to the Talkeetna River Drainage.

History

The Willow area has been home to human activity for centuries. Native Alaskans were drawn to the area for its rich fishing, the same reason people from all over the world still visit the area. After gold was discovered in 1897, the area began attracting non-Native settlers. This trend continued as the Alaska Railroad pushed north to Nenana prior to World War I, bringing construction workers and their suppliers. World War II brought the military to Willow and temporarily interrupted the flow of gold. By 1972, with the completion of the Parks Highway, Willow became a mecca for anglers.

Activities

Willow is well-known for its fishing. Rivers and creeks with names such as Deshka, Alexander, Yentna, Little Susitna, Willow, Kashwitna, Goose, Sunshine, Little Willow, Sheep and Montana are familiar to anglers around the world. The Little Susitna River, Willow Creek and Sheep Creek are handicapped accessible.

During the winter, Willow becomes a training ground for dog mushers who live in the area specifically to prepare for races such as the Iditarod. Other popular winter activities include cross-country skiing and snowmachining.

Willow is also a terminus for the Hatcher Pass Road, connecting Palmer to the Parks Highway. This scenic road is closed during the winter, but provides access to great hiking and berry picking during the summer.

Camping and Facilities

There are two first-come, first-served campgrounds in the Willow Creek State Recreation Area: Willow Creek and Deception Creek. Additional camping is available further south in the Nancy Lake area.

Public boat ramps are available at the Deshka, Willow Creek and Susitna landings.

For More Information

Mat-Su Region State Park Office
HC 32 Box 6706
Wasilla, Alaska 99654
907-745-3975
www.alaskastateparks.org



Talkeetna Area—High Adventure

Directions

Talkeetna is 115 miles north of Anchorage and 143 miles south of Fairbanks. At milepost 98.7 of the Parks Highway, take the Talkeetna Spur Road 14 miles to the east.

History

Talkeetna began as a turn-of-the-century gold mining town and trading post. The town's population peaked during the expansion of the Alaska Railroad to Nenana. Following World War I, the town declined until it found new life as an aviation and supply base for climbers on Mount McKinley. The buildings of the original town were placed on the National Historic Register in 1993.

Activities

Talkeetna is an important air-taxi center, providing Mount McKinley flightseeing and glacier landings, as well as fly-in fishing trips. The area also offers a wide variety of outdoor activities such as horseback riding, rafting, hiking and fishing. In winter it's a great place to see the northern lights, go dog mushing or cross-country skiing.

Visit local museums and the National Park Service ranger station, where climbers must register. The ranger station features photographs on the climbing history of Mount McKinley and memorabilia from past ascents. A climbers' memorial is located in the town cemetery across from the airfield.

Favorite places to fish are Clear Creek, Fish Creek (handicapped accessible) and Prairie Creek.

Facilities

All facilities other than the ranger station are commercial. Public campgrounds are located 52 miles north in Denali State Park or 32 miles south in Willow Creek State Recreation Area.

For More Information

Talkeetna Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 334
Talkeetna, Alaska 99676
907-733-2330
www.talkeetna-chamber.com

Talkeetna Ranger Station
P.O. Box 588
Talkeetna, AK 99676
Phone: 907-733-2231
Fax: 907-733-1465
www.nps.gov/dena



Denali State Park

Directions

Located at mile 132 on the Parks Highway, Denali State Park is a two-and-a-half-hour drive north of Anchorage. The park's western fringes can be reached from the Petersville Road at mile 115. High clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicles are recommended beyond mile 18.

History

Denali State Park covers 325,240 acres—almost one-half the size of Rhode Island—and offers recreational opportunities ranging from roadside camping to wilderness exploration.

Denali State Park has superb vantage points for viewing the breathtaking heart of the Alaska Range. Perhaps the best roadside view is at mile 135.2 of the Parks Highway. Here, an interpretive bulletin board names the mountains and other terrain features. Other excellent views of Mount McKinley and the Alaska Range are found at mile 147.1, 158.1 and 162.3.

Cabins and Campgrounds

Two log cabins on Byers Lake are available for rent year-round. Byers Lake Cabin #1 is accessible by car; Cabin #2 is a 1/2-mile walk from the parking area. Byers Lake Campground offers 74 sites with toilets, drinking water and a boat launch. There are 20 other camping sites located at both the upper and lower end of the park.

Activities

The park is known for its views of Mount McKinley. Other recreational opportunities include camping, hiking, backpacking, berry picking, fishing, hunting, and river kayaking. Winter activities include skiing, dog mushing and snowmachining.

Trailheads are located at Upper Troublesome Creek (mile 137.6), Byers Lake (mile 147), Ermine Hill (mile 156.5) and Little Coal Creek (mile 163.9). The K'esugi Ridge-Troublesome Creek Trail is 36 miles long with an elevation gain of 3,500 feet. Above timberline the trail is marked by rock cairns, but map reading skills or GPS are recommended.

Visitor Center

The visitor center at the Alaska Veterans Memorial, milepost 147.1, has information on the park's history, natural resources and hiking routes.

For More Information

Alaska State Parks
Mat-Su/Copper Basin Area
HC 32, Box 6706
Wasilla, AK 99654
Phone: 907-745-3975
Fax: 907-745-0938
www.alaskastateparks.org



Denali Highway—Road to Adventure

Directions

Take the Parks Highway to Cantwell (209 miles from Anchorage, 123 miles from Fairbanks) and follow signs for the Denali Highway. The highway is generally open mid-May to October 1.

History

The Denali Highway was the original road into Denali National Park before the Parks Highway was built. The highway also provides access to archaeological sites at Tangle Lakes, access to the Gulkana Wild River and the Delta Wild and Scenic River on the Paxson end of the Highway.

Activities

Summer visitors will find hiking, fishing, sightseeing, bicycling and floating opportunities. During the winter, the highway is popular with snowmachiners and dog mushers.

Camping

There are two, non-reservable campgrounds at each end of the highway with over 20 campsites each. The maximum stay at these campgrounds is 14 days and they are very popular during the hunting season. For additional information call 907-271-5555.

Facilities

Along the highway are several viewpoints, interpretive signs and waysides with outhouses. Planning your stops is important as there are few trees to hide behind along the road.

For More Information

Bureau of Land Management
Glennallen District Office
P.O. Box 147
Glennallen, AK 99588
907-822-3217
www.glennallen.ak.blm.gov/DenaliHwy





Denali National Park and Preserve

Located at mile 237 of the Parks Highway, Denali National Park and Preserve is renowned for its spectacular vistas, abundant wildlife and backcountry adventures. The park offers six million acres of trailless, undisturbed wild lands. The Visitor Center is located just one mile down the Park Road and is open from May to September. During the summer, shuttle buses provide transportation into the heart of the park. A number of campgrounds offer visitors overnight experiences: Riley Creek Campground with 146 sites is only one mile from the Parks Highway. Some services are available in the park, others can be found just north of the park toward the town of Healy or south in the town of Cantwell. Camping is permitted at Riley Creek year-round, although services are limited off-season.

For more information, write for a copy of the *Alpenglow*, Denali's park visitor guide, or contact the park:

Denali National Park and Preserve

P.O. Box 9

Denali Park, AK 99755

907-683-2294

www.nps.gov/dena



Fairbanks Area

Directions

Fairbanks is located 358 miles north of Anchorage.

History

After Felix Pedro discovered gold in 1902, Fairbanks emerged as a support base for miners. The town changed during World War II as the military established a presence in this northern city. Following the war, the University of Alaska Fairbanks expanded in scope and importance, changing from a mining college to a leading institution in geophysics and engineering. In the 1970s, oil usurped gold as the more important resource, strengthening ties between Fairbanks and the oil-rich Arctic. Today, Fairbanks still reflects a diverse history involving the military, mineral extraction and scientific research.

Activities

Fairbanks is the gateway to the Arctic and the heart of the Interior. Visitors wishing to travel to the Arctic Circle, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge or the Arctic Ocean do so from here.

The White Mountain National Recreation Area, the Chena River State Recreation Area and the Pinnell Mountain Recreation Trail provide backcountry opportunities just outside the city. These areas offer dog mushing, snowmachining and cross-country skiing in the winter, and fishing, boating, hiking, horseback riding and climbing during the summer.

Public boat ramps are located at Chena River State Recreation Site and at the Whitefish Campground in the Lower Chatanika River State Recreation Area.

Camping

The Bureau of Land Management operates 12 cabins in the White Mountains National Recreation Area. The State of Alaska operates six cabins and a nonprofit organization runs an additional 12 cabins in the Chena River State Recreation Area.

Campgrounds are located at Cripple Creek, Mount Prindle and Ophir in the Chena River Recreation Area.

For More Information

Fairbanks Alaska Public Lands Information Center
250 Cushman, Suite 1A
Fairbanks, AK 99701
907-456-0532

White Mountains National Recreation Area
907-474-2250

Chena River State Recreation Site
907-269-8400



The Aurora is caused by solar energy colliding with the earth's atmosphere. As different gases are struck, they are energized and glow with different colors, similar to a neon light. These ghostly lights are best seen from mid-September through April.

Alaska Public Lands Information Center—Fairbanks

Directions

Located in the heart of downtown Fairbanks, the Alaska Public Lands Information Center is the gateway to Interior and Arctic Alaska.

Summer Activities

During the summer, staff is on-hand to answer questions about recreational opportunities, the Dalton Highway to the north, Denali National Park to the south, and the Chena and Chatanika state recreation areas near Fairbanks. The visitor center hosts exhibits, films and daily programs. Native artist demonstrations are offered intermittently throughout the year.

Winter Activities

During the winter, the "Explore Alaska" series features guest speakers. Classroom and family programs give children and adults the opportunity to explore Alaska through a variety of games, activities and learning adventures.

Visitor Center

The Alaska Public Lands Information Center in Fairbanks is open 7 days a week from Memorial Day to Labor Day, and Tuesday through Saturday during the winter. Visitors can purchase park entrance and parking passes, and books and maps from the Alaska Natural History Association bookstore.



For More Information

Fairbanks Alaska Public Lands
Information Center
250 Cushman, Suite 1A
Fairbanks, AK 99701
Phone: 907-456-0527
Fax: 907-456-0514
www.nps.gov/aplic



Backcountry Guide



SAFETY CONCERNS include influenza and car accidents, the two major causes of death among Alaska visitors. Visitors to Alaska have traveled a great distance, their sleep patterns and eating habits are disturbed, and they are usually dehydrated. These factors lead to an inability of the body to defend itself against flu and cold viruses, and to drowsiness behind the wheel. Prevention requires sensible scheduling, a proper diet and lots of liquids.

PLAN YOUR HIKE OR TRIP with distances and availability of services in mind. Check the weather and inquire about trail conditions. Let someone know where you are going and when you will return. Plan for delays. Carry extra water, snacks and medical prescriptions.

HYPOTHERMIA can strike in any season. Hypothermia is the critical lowering of the body's core temperature and is signaled by these early symptoms: shivering, numbness, slurred speech, loss of coordination, drowsiness and exhaustion. Avoid hypothermia by eating high-calorie foods and snacks, drinking plenty of water and staying dry. Layer clothing for your level of activity to minimize sweating.

MOSQUITOES are plentiful—there are 25 to 40 different species in Alaska. Currently none of Alaska's mosquitoes are known to carry disease, but circumstances can change quickly. Due to high concentrations of mosquitoes, long-sleeved clothing, head nets and repellent are essential in many areas.

TRAVELING ALONE increases your risk. Travel in groups and be prepared. Cell phones may not work in various parts of Alaska or in the backcountry.

WATER may look pure, but needs to be treated. *Giardia* is widespread in Alaska waters and is highly contagious. Boil water for 3-5 minutes, treat with iodine tablets or use a water filter.

RIVER CROSSINGS can be hazardous, especially late in the day or after a heavy rainfall. Evaluate conditions and be familiar with safe techniques for crossing. Cross early in the day at the widest or most braided portion of the river. Loosen pack straps in case of a fall. Never cross with bare feet.

WILDLIFE is abundant. Moose may appear tame, but can be dangerous. Wolves and fox can carry rabies. Enjoy wildlife quietly and at a safe distance. Never feed any wild animals, and keep a clean camp.



- Plan ahead and prepare.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
- Dispose of waste properly.
- Leave what you find.
- Minimize campfire impacts.
- Respect wildlife.
- Be considerate of others.



Public Use Cabins

There are a number of public use cabins for overnight stays. Cabins generally have a heating stove, bunks or sleeping platforms, table and chairs, and an outhouse. Visitors are responsible for providing food, cook stove and utensils, water and bedding. Most cabins are available for rent year-round, although some are accessible only during certain seasons. Cabin permits are issued on a first-come, first-served basis for noncommercial purposes to anyone over 18 years old. Cabins are managed by different agencies, each with its own guidelines for rental.

Chugach State Park
Eagle River Nature Center
Phone: 907-694-2108
Fax: 907-694-2119
www.ernc.org

Alaska State Parks
Public Information Center
550 West 7th Ave., Suite 1260
Anchorage, AK 99501
907-269-8400
www.akstateparks.org

White Mountains Recreation Area
Bureau of Land Management
1150 University Avenue
Fairbanks, AK 99709
907-474-2250
www.aurora.ak.blm.gov/WhiteMtns

Camping Passes

Both Anchorage and Fairbanks Public Lands Information Centers sell state and federal park passes. The State of Alaska offers a day-use and a boat-launch pass for residents and non-residents. National park passes are also available at the centers and individual parks. Denali and Kenai Fjords national parks are among the few Alaska parks charging entrance fees. An additional \$15 hologram allows visitors entrance to all federal areas throughout the United States. Golden Access and Golden Age passes are also available.



Safety in Bear Country

Alaska is home to both black bears (*Ursus americanus*) and grizzly or brown bears (*Ursus arctos*). You may encounter bears anywhere along the highways, in the backcountry, and even in the city. All bears are potentially dangerous. A few simple precautions can keep you safe and ensure that Alaska's bears remain healthy and wild.

AVOID ENCOUNTERS

Be alert: Bears are active day and night and may show up anywhere. Watch for tracks, scat or carrion. Avoid salmon streams and berry patches at their peak.

MAKE YOUR PRESENCE KNOWN

If you startle a bear, it may react defensively. Make noise, particularly in thick brush, high grass or near a noisy stream. Sing, yell or clap your hands loudly. Travel in groups and never intentionally approach a bear closer than 1/4 mile.

KEEP A CLEAN CAMP

Bears will investigate any odor. Store food, trash and personal hygiene products in a bag suspended in a tree or use bear-resistant containers (check with the nearest visitor center for loaners). Cook and store food at least 100 feet from your tent or in your vehicle if available.

IF YOU ENCOUNTER A BEAR

DO NOT RUN! Running may elicit a chase response. If the bear does not see you, backtrack or detour quickly. If the bear sees you, back away slowly. Speak in a low, calm voice while waving your arms slowly above your head.

IF A BEAR APPROACHES OR CHARGES

Stand your ground and prepare your deterrent. Keep your pack on. Bears may come within 10 feet before stopping or veering away. Stand still until the bear moves away, then slowly back off.

IF A GRIZZLY ATTACKS, PLAY DEAD

Curl up into a ball or lie flat on the ground, face down and legs apart. Lace your hands behind your neck. If the attack is prolonged, fight back.

IF A BLACK BEAR ATTACKS, FIGHT BACK VIGOROUSLY.

DOES PEPPER SPRAY WORK?

Pepper sprays containing capsaicin, a red pepper extract, have been used with some success as non-lethal deterrents against attacks by bears. The spray must be fired directly in the bear's face at a range of six to eight yards. If discharged upwind, the spray will disable you. Use sprays approved by EPA that contain at least eight ounces of deterrent. Sprays should not be used like insect repellent—don't spread them on your clothes or equipment. If you plan to take it on an airplane, tell the pilot so it can be stored safely outside the plane.

WILL BELLS KEEP BEARS AWAY?

Bears are curious animals and they just might want to investigate that musical jingling. Distinctly human noises are a much better deterrent to bear encounters. Yell, sing, clap your hands loudly or shake a can with pebbles in it.



Wildlife Deserve Our Respect

DON'T FEED THE ANIMALS it is illegal. Animals that come to depend on people for food can become unpredictable and dangerous, and may need to be destroyed.

ENJOY WILDLIFE AT A DISTANCE by using binoculars or a telephoto lens to observe an animal's natural behavior. Avoid shouting, gesturing or otherwise disturbing animals. If an animal's behavior is interrupted by your presence, you are too close.

HELP WILD PARENTS by avoiding nesting areas and limiting your time viewing young animals to 5-10 minutes. You may be keeping a parent from warming its eggs or tending offspring. Wild animals can be fiercely protective of their young; never get between a mother and its young.

LEAVE YOUR PETS AT HOME for your safety and theirs. Pets can chase wildlife, dig up nests, kill baby animals, or lead an angry animal back to you. A wild animal may injure or kill your pet in protection of life or territory.

PICK UP LITTER and pack out what you pack in. Garbage attracts bears and other wildlife. Litter, especially fishing line, can entangle or trap wildlife.

RESPECT WILD ANIMALS who are engaged in a daily struggle to find food, shelter and water necessary for survival. Human disturbance can mean the difference between life and death. Remember that we are the visitors.

REMIND OTHERS of their ethical responsibility. Help protect and preserve the natural wonders of Alaska for the future—it is up to all of us.



Tundra and Taiga

Much of Southcentral and Interior Alaska is boreal forest, part of an ecosystem that encircles the higher latitudes of the entire northern hemisphere. Stretching across Russia, Canada, Scandinavia, and parts of China and Mongolia, this ecosystem represents a third of the world's forests. Boreal forests, or taiga, are areas of extreme climate. Temperatures can vary as much as 160 degrees between summer and winter. Summer days are long, but daylight in the winter is scarce and without heat. Common species in this harsh environment include white and black spruce, birch, aspen, cottonwood, larch, willow and alder. The boreal forest supports moose, black and brown bear, lynx, wolf, snowshoe hare, ptarmigan and tree squirrel, among other species.

At lower elevations, stream, pond and river areas are home to red currant, high bush cranberry and watermelon berries. Cottonwood, black spruce and alder thrive near water. Wild geranium, monkshood, fireweed and prickly rose are just a few of the wildflowers seen in these areas. Animals specific to wet lowlands include moose, beaver, muskrat, waterfowl and wood frog. Bird and wildlife enthusiasts enjoy the diversity of wetland animals, while hikers generally seek higher ground.

At higher elevations, above 3,000 feet, alpine tundra is home to a different community of species. These areas are typically treeless and windy. Here willows, dwarf birch, alpine bearberry, blueberry, grasses, lichens and mosses hug the landscape. A surprising variety of fragile, adaptive wildflowers make the most of the short spring and summer. Wildflowers begin blooming in late May and peak in late June. Animal species include Dall sheep, mountain goats, pika, caribou, fox, golden eagle and ground squirrel. Mountain passes are migration routes for raptors and other birds in the spring and fall.

Alaska's boreal forest holds an important place in the state's history and character. Subsistence hunting and gathering are important to Native and rural populations. Plants and animals have long provided materials for food, shelter, transportation, medicine and crafts. Scientists claim this forest ecosystem, in helping to purify large masses of air and water, is a primary factor in the health of the earth. The northern boreal forest remains a mainstay for wildlife, recreation, traditional uses, and as a mitigating factor in global climate change.





Help Protect Public Lands

PROTECT NATURAL FEATURES by leaving wildflowers for the next visitor. Do your part in preventing human-caused wildfires by using camp stoves or established fire pits. Collect only dead trees for fires. Leave cultural or historical artifacts in place and inform rangers of their location. Remember that it is illegal to collect eagle feathers or parts.

MOTORIZED VEHICLES cause lasting damage to vegetation and trails. Stay on established roads and trails unless otherwise advised. Check openings and closings for snowmachines and other off-road travel.

PETS must be on leashes at developed facilities, such as campgrounds and picnic areas, and under voice command in other areas. Dogs are not allowed in Denali National Park and Preserve.

HUNTING & FISHING are permitted in many areas, but there are specific regulations for each unit. Be sure you have accurate maps of unit boundaries. Contact Alaska Department of Fish and Game for firearms regulations.

RESPECT private property.

TRASH should be removed or placed in containers provided. In the backcountry or off-season, pack out what you pack in. Practice low-impact camping.

Alaska Public Lands Information Centers

- Anchorage 907-271-2737
- Fairbanks 907-456-0527
- Ketchikan 907-228-6220
- Tok 907-883-5667



For More Information
Anchorage Public Lands Information Center
605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 105
Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone: 907-271-2737
Fax: 907-271-2744
www.nps.gov/aplic